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ABSTRACT

A sample of 791 adult students enrolled in evening credit classes at Valencia Community College was surveyed to determine their demographic characteristics and reasons for enrollment, and to compare this data with other studies to assess the representativeness of Valencia students. Questionnaire results indicated that the average Valencia evening credit student is an adult white male, married, about 25 years of age, who works 40 hours per week, and has a family income above $9,000. The Valencia student is seeking a degree and hopes for either advancement in a currently held job or movement to a new job as a result of the academic program. When these data were compared to local census data, it appeared that Valencia students were representative of the county population as a whole. Valencia students differed from a national sample of entering college freshmen, however, who were likely to be younger, unmarried, nonveterans with larger family incomes. Valencia students did appear similar to national samples of other evening students, although they were more likely to indicate preparation for a new job as their main reason for college attendance. The survey instrument and a summary of responses to open-ended questions are appended. (DR)

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SURVEY OF EVENING CREDIT CLASS STUDENTS VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE WINTER 1977

by

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Mathematics

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VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE P.O. Box 3028 Orlando, FL 32802

SURVEY OF EVENING CREDIT CLASS STUDENTS

VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Winter 1977

INTRODUCTION

Adult education literature carries research reports describing adults enrolled in continuing education programs. These reports describe the typical student, his needs, reasons for attendance and services desired.

The purpose of this survey was to find out similar data for the students in Valencia Community College's evening credit classes and make comparisons when possible to other general studies. It was further thought that the survey would reveal areas of need as perceived by these students and identify enrollment trends.

Some authors (Pagano and Calvert, Kreitlow) have noted the lack of research in the field of adult education. One area of need identified was the need to learn more about those who have taken adult education courses and their reasons for taking courses. There have been surveys of Valencia students in recent years (Edwards, et al and Rhamstine) that considered some similar questions, but these studies included all students, both day and night, enrolled in the session examined.

The adult student enrolled in evening credit classes at Velencia during the Winter Session, 1977, was the population surveyed. A large sample of this group was surveyed and compared to studies from other sources that could be compared to this population. The specific objectives of the Survey may be stated as follows:

1. To determine certain demographic data for the Valencia Community College students in evening credit classes and report the findings.
2. To identify reasons students give for enrollment.
3. To describe the typical Valencia evening credit student.
4. To cite some similarities and differences revealed by a comparison with the other studies and reports.

PROCEDURES

A large sample (N=791) representative of the total group was selected for the survey. A count was taken of all classes offered on the West Campus of Valencia Community College on Wednesday and Thursday evenings and the 93 classes were sub-divided into three categories:

1. Academic-General
2. Technical/Occupational
3. Art, Music and Physical Education

(see Table 1)

Type / Amt.	Academic-General	Technical/Occupational	Art, Music, Physical Edu.
No.	45	38	10
%	48%	41%	11%

Classification of Evening Classes

TABLE 1

Of the 93 classes, 50 sections averaging twenty students per class were selected using the same ratio for the three categories as the table revealed allowing for approximately 1000 students maximum in the sample.

Using the Florida IRC's Guidelines for Survey Research and Questionnaire Construction (1970) a questionnaire was prepared with 14 multiple-choice response items and four open-ended items. (See appendix I) Demographic data to be compared to other studies and questions related to reasons for enrollment and sources of financial aid were formulated. An answer sheet that could be scored on the local computer was provided by the Valencia Research Department, promising access to a Student Evaluation Summary program that had been prepared for the IBM 370 computer. This scoring procedure would permit high-speed preparation making it possible to treat large samples in a minimum of time. The open-ended questions were to be summarized at a later date and become part of a second report to be submitted to the Dean of Academic Affairs at the West Campus of Valencia Community College.

A review of selected studies and local data related to the Orlando area and college student population was made for purpose of comparison to the group surveyed. A brief resumé of the General Characteristics of the population of the greater Orlando area (SMSA) 1970 U. S. Census was secured locally. An enrollment analysis of the total Valencia student population, Session I, 1976, was made available by the Valencia Research office. Earlier Valencia studies (Edwards, et al 1972 and Rhamstine, 1973) were examined and related facts tabulated to provide comparative data. These two studies included all students for the selected terms and sought to identify variables associated with non-persistence.

The January 10, 1977 issue of the Chronical of Higher Education provided national data for comparison through its report on the

characteristics of 76-77 freshmen.

Two other sources served to give data for other related comparisons (1) Long (71) quotes a National Opinion Research Center (NORC) 1969 Survey concerning participants in educational activities and (2) Williams (1969) in Adult Leadership cites other NORC studies in 1962 and 1963 showing responses to reasons for participating in college classes. A summary of Dorothy Knoell's report of California's community colleges appeared in the C/J College Journal (Nov. 76), this report also provided comparative statements.

The above sources provided the basis for comparisons to the data for the Valencia students included in this Survey.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Data received from the survey were analyzed in terms of percentages of students in each category of the factors. The factors were grouped in two general headings; (1) those related to student reasons for enrollment and expectation of this course or program and (2) those related directly to demographic data. See Tables 2 and 3.

TABLE 2

1.	Age (years)	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56 & over
	Number, %	373-48%	285-37%	78-10%	35-4%	7-1%
2.	Sex	Female		Male		
		283-37%		489-63%		
3.	Race	White (cauc.)	Black	Asian/Oriental	Spanish	Other
		637-82%	105-14%	18-2%	7-1%	8-1%
4.	Marital Status	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Separated
		200-38%	391-51%	58-8%	15-2%	9-1%
5.	Employment hrs/week	0	20 hrs or less	21 - 39		40 or more
		131-17%	59-8%	99-13%		484-63%
6.	Prior Education	not H.S. graduate	High School Graduate	Some College		College Graduate
		15-2%	175-23%	533-68%		62-8%
7.	Family Income	Below 3 thousand $'s	$3-5.999	$6-8.999	$9-14.999	$15 & over
		40-5%	106-14%	137-18%	248-33%	226-30%
8.	Source of Aid	Self/Scholarship	Employer	V.A. Benefits	Other Aids	Parents
		331-43%	60-8%	250-32%	73-9%	64-8%

TABLE 3

1.	Course taking (classification)	Home & Personal Improvement	Degree Program	Bus. or Bus. Improvement	Arts/ Crafts	Recreation Sport
		35-5%	455-59%	233-30%	33-4%	13-2%
2.	Reason	Vocational new skill	Advance in present job	Interest/ Hobby	Better Informed	Relaxation Fun
		296-34%	222-29%	84-11%	150-20%	12-2%
3.	Is course part of degree Prog.	Yes	No			
		632-82%	140-18%			
4.	Will course improve job advances?	Yes	No			
		572-74%	199-26%			
5.	Is this first class at VCC	Yes	No			
		130-17%	643-83%			
6.	Do you desire counselling?	Yes	No			
		499-65%	236-31%			

From this data we note the Valencia evening credit student is basically an adult white male, married, about age 25 years, who works 40 hours a week and having a family income above $9,000. He is likely to receive VA benefits but, mainly, is paying his own way. He is seeking a degree and hopes for either advancement in his present job or a new job as a result of his program.

COMPARISONS

Census Data

The local census data of 1970 shows an overall Orlando population of 428,003 almost equally divided between men and women, 82% white and 15% black. Further, it records 64% married, 22% single and 14% other. 56% are high school graduates and the median income is near $10,000.

A comparison to the Valencia data shows these differences: a higher ratio of males attend credit classes; more singles attend, and the students have more formal education. The racial balance and income figures are nearly the same for both groups.

College Freshman

The data in the "Characteristics of 1976-77 Freshmen" (of the Chronical 77) are quite different from the group surveyed. The freshmen class was 90% age 18-19, racially 86% white, 8% black; 98% were not married and 98% were not veterans. They receive the expenses mainly from their parents, most of whom make over $15,000.

All these factors differ from the Valencia students except on racial balance, which is approximately the same.

Valencia Studies

The three sets of demographic data for Valencia students, present similar pictures. Rhamstine observed in '73 that the student population is shifting from young, fresh-from-high-school, full-time to a population of older, part-time, employed students. The '76 report bears this out for it shows 56% part-time students. The evening students account for much of this since our survey revealed 63% work 40-plus hours a week. Racially the comparisons shows black students comprise 14% of evening enrollment and only 10% overall.

Research Studies

Long's (1971) report of the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) 1969 Survey and Williams' (1969) reference to other NORC reports show the Valencia evening student to be similar in several areas. One difference, however, has to do with reason for attendance. The NORC

reports show about one-third attended to prepare for a new job or to help on their present jobs. But at Valencia two-thirds of the students give this as their reason.

The Valencia students seem much like the students reported by Knoell, although not enough data was collected in this study for a true comparison.

These students desired to have counseling for future course planning (65%). Although it is not required nor available except on a request basis at Valencia.

CONCLUSION

The Valencia evening credit students are quite representative of the general area population but more different from the day students. The evening students account for many of the large number of part-time students. It may be suggested that similar surveys be taken yearly to note trends for evening enrollments.

Valencia seems to be reaching racial groups in about the same ratio as in the population. Effort should be maintained to keep this up.

The students are in courses and programs largely to prepare for job advancement or a new job. A question needs to be seriously considered: Since students seek job skills and since they requested counseling to plan future courses, why don't we provide counseling service to them as much as in the day-time?

In closing I would quote Dorothy Knoell (76) "having concluded that continuing education for older, part-time students has become the dominant function, it is recommended that community colleges be recognized in law as 'less than baccalaureate: with statements of function revised

so as to give proper emphasis to the mission of serving community needs for continuing education."

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A Survey of Evening Division Students

You are being asked to participate in a study that coule result in better educational opportunities for students. The information you provide will be analyzed along with that provided by many others enrolled in evening classes. In no case will responses be related to you or the teacher of this course to identify an individual. Because it is important to know about the characteristics of students, certain personal facts are needed. Please be assured that no one can or will identify any information with an individual.

Answer questions 1 thru 14 on the special answer sheet provided. Use black lead pencil only and mark one choice clearly. The last four questions should be answered on this paper.

Thanks for your cooperation.

1. Age:

    a. 18 to 25 (or younger)
    b. 26 to 35
    c. 36 to 45
    d. 46 to 55
    e. 56 or older

2. Sex:

    a. female
    b. male

3. Race:

    a. Asian/Oriental
    b. Black
    c. Spanish surname
    d. White
    e. other

4. Marital status:

    a. single
    b. married
    c. divorced
    d. widowed
    e. separated

5. Describe your present employment:

    a. not working.
    b. 20 hours or less per week
    c. 20 to 39 hours per week
    d. 40 or more hours per week

6. What is the highest grade you have completed in school?

   a. did not finish high school
   b. high school graduate or equivalency
   c. some college
   d. college graduate

7. Is this the first class you have attended at Valencia?

   a. yes
   b. no

8. In what general area is the course you are presently taking?

   a. home or personal improvement
   b. academic (for a degree program)
   c. business or professional improvement
   d. creative arts, crafts, or music
   e. recreation or sport

9. What is your main interest in taking this course?

   a. vocational (learn new skill or training)
   b. to advance in my present job
   c. to pursue an interest or hobby
   d. to become a better informed person
   e. relaxation and fun to meet new people

10. The cost of this course is being paid, mostly, by

    a. yourself (include scholarship)
    b. your employer
    c. VA benefits
    d. other government grant or aid (BEOG, LEEP, etc.)
    e. parent

11. My family annual income is

    a. below $3,000
    b. $3,000 to $5,999
    c. $6,000 to $8,999
    d. $9,000 to $14,999
    e. $15,000 or more

12. Do you believe taking this course will improve your chances of advancing in your job or finding a new job?

    a. yes
    b. no

13. Is the course you are presently taking part of a degree program?

    a. yes
    b. no

14. Would you like to receive counseling to plan future courses?

    a. yes
    b. no
    c. I won't be taking any more courses

Please answer the following questions on this sheet in the provided space.

15. Was there a main reason why you attended Valencia rather than some other educational institution?

16. If you are planning a degree program (2 or 4-year), state your major field of interest.

17. Are there any courses or programs you would like to see introduced in the evening program?

18. What changes would you like to see made to make your experience more pleasant or beneficial? (transportation, time schedule, child care, parking, etc.)

A SURVEY OF EVENING CREDIT CLASS STUDENTS AT VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, WINTER 1978
PART 2: SUMMARY OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

As a part of the survey questionnaire described in the original report four open-ended questions were included.[1] The responses to these items were tabulated and a summary of the results can be found in tables 1 - 4.

Conclusions

Table 1 reflects Valencia's evening credit students' main reason for attending is nearness (52%). There is much diversity in the educational goals of the evening students, no doubt they are as diverse as that of the total student body. Only one area of interest strongly outnumbered the others, namely, business. (See Table 2). Science, engineering, nursing and education accounted for a large part of the academic areas. There were 30 four-year areas identified and 18 career areas. The two most frequently named career areas were law enforcement and fire technology.

About half of the students indicated satisfaction with the programs. Courses and program additions requested by the others were quite diverse (see Table #3). This list may provide those planning courses with information for future offerings.

Footnote 1 See Edwards, L. M. Survey of Evening Credit Class Students at Valencia Community College (an unpublished report at Valencia Community College, Orlando, FL 32802, 1978).

TABLE #1

Question 15. Was there a main reason why you attended Valencia rather than some other educational institution?

Total responses: N = 871

	Reason	Frequency	%
1.	Near home	450	52%
2.	Tuition (reasonable, low)	127	15%
3.	Career related choice	72	8%
4.	Pleasant atmosphere (reputation)	122	14%
5.	Other reason or no answer	100	11%
		871	100%

TABLE #2

Question #16. If you are planning a degree program (2 or 4 yr.), state your major field of interest.

Total Response N = 608

Academic Fields

N_1 = 357 (59%)

Area	#	Area	#	Area	#
Business	142	Science areas:	44	Others:	28
Engineering	47	Science (gen.)	8	Prelaw	3
Nursing	33	Biology	9	Phy Ed.	6
Education	26	Pre-Med	11	Recreation	3
Art	14	Physics	2	Photography	4
Social work	12	Math	3	Humanities	2
Psychology	11	Pre-veterinary	2	Religion	1
		Forrestry	3	Music	1
		Agriculture	3	Foreign Lang.	2
		Health Services	1	Theatre	1
		Optical	1	Speech	1
		Oceanography	1	Journalism	2
				Library Science	2

Career Fields

N_2 = 251 (41%)

Area	#	Area	#	Area	#
Law Enforce., etc	57	Business	14	Other:	37
Fire Technology	32	Sales	4	Med. Lab.	4
Archi & Build. Gen.	24	Real Estate	6	Dental Hygiene	6
Data Processing	22	Med. Secre	4	Resp. Therapy	6
Electronics	19			Child Ed.	7
Horticulture	16			Survey	8
Para-legal	15			Graphic Art	4
Hotel-Motel	15			Tech. Occup.	2

TABLE #3

Question #17 Are there any courses or programs you would like to see introduced in the evening program?

	Results	Respondents	Percent
1.	No answer	242	48%
2.	Academic area	107	21%
3	Voc.-Tech area	72	14%
4.	Hobby	81	16%
		N = 502	

Breakdown by Area:

2. Academic: 107

Black History	2	Philosophy	2	Reading Lab	7
History	3	Teaching courses	1	Business	7
Government	2	Woman Studies	1	Tech. writing	1
Management	1	Spanish	6	Journalism	3
Sociology	2	German	1	Drama	1
Psychology	5	Arabic	1	Creative writing	2
Education	1	Foreign Lang.	3	Literature	1
Sex Education	1	Logic	1	Personnel Manag.	1
Anthropology	2	Pub. Rel.	2	Accounting	5
Educ. Psy.	1	Humanities	3	Agriculture	1
Science(Lab)	27	Geology	1	Forrestry	1
Physics	1	Calculus	2	Microbiology	1
Astronomy	3	Statistics	1		

3. Vocational - Technical Areas - 72

L. E. Courses	7	Electronics	4	Optical	1
Fire Tech.	7	Surveying	6	Drafting	1
Horticulture	7	Graphics Arts	2	Electro-Mech.	1
Real Estate	5	Data Process	3	Auto-Mech.	2
Tax & Insurance	2	COBOL Prog	3	Air Craft	1
Foods for children	1	Telephone communications	1	Metric System	1
Medical Lab	1	Typing	2	Welding	1
Hotel-Motel	1	Shorthand	2	Plumbing	1
Ex. Secretary	1	Key Punch	1	Carpentry	1

4. Hobby Areas: 81

Art	15	Dancing	6	Karate & PE	12
Photography	4	Jazz	2	Fencing	1
Design	7	Music (Chorus)	3	Scuba	1
Print-making	4	Guitar	3	Yoga	1
Ceramics	4	Cooking & Nutrition	4	Self hypnosis	1
Quilt making	1	Home improvement	1	Memory Course	1
Visual arts	2	Upholstry	1	Morse Code	1
Sculpture	1	Homemaking	2	Everyday emerg.	1
Moving explo.	1			Trans-meditation	1

TABLE #4

Question #18. What changes would you like to see made to make your experience more pleasant or beneficial? (transportation, time schedule, child care, parking, etc.)

Results: N = 421

1.	"No" response	108	26%
2.	Better Parking	70	17%
3.	Provide child care	40	10%
4.	Mass transportation	21	5%
5.	Time variation (earlier, later, longer, shorter, etc.)	76	
6.	Time or Place (Supper, Sat, Fri, East, Oceola, etc.)	45	11%
7.	Fewer Surveys	6	1%
8.	Services:.....	55	13%
	Better Registration	9	
	Better Food Serv.	18	
	Extend hrs. Bookstore, Food)	9	
	Library weekend	6	
	Better inform. on counseling & cat.	6	
	Lower Tuition	3	
	Evening has financial aids	4	

Table 4 summarizes the responses of various changes which students said they would like to offer for consideration. It may be well to note that of the nearly eight-hundred students surveyed (N = 791) only about half (N = 421) responded to this question, and one-fourth (26%) didn't feel a change was needed. Parking and some time variations were most frequently named as areas needing change.

rbTa

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